

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING HELD ON
26th NOVEMBER 2008 AT CARADOG HOUSE, CARDIFF**

Commissioners

Mrs. S G Smith (Chair)
Mr P J Wood (Deputy Chair)
Rev H M Davies

Observer

Mr J Bader

Secretariat

Mr. E H Lewis (Secretary)
Mr. S R Halsall
Mr. D Carr
Mr. R Handscomb
Mrs. Abbie Prescott-Bird

Wales Audit Office (WAO) [part]

Mr C Davies
Mr J Herniman

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Mr Bader who would be commencing his appointment as Member of the Commission from the 1st January 2009.

1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 1.1 There were no new interests declared. It was noted that Mr Bader had given a list of his interests to the Secretariat.

2. MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON 15th OCTOBER 2008

- 2.1 These were agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Wrexham Community Review

- 3.1 It was reported that the Welsh Assembly Government had not yet made a decision on the Commission's Wrexham Community Review Reports and Proposals. This matter was to be raised at the forthcoming quarterly liaison meeting between the Secretariat and Sponsor Division.

Community Council Election Results

- 3.2 The Secretariat had written to all community councils in Wales seeking their comments on the community council election results findings for 2008. Several responses had been received from councils and it was hoped that the feedback would prove useful for future annual meetings and workshops.

Blaenau Gwent Community Review

- 3.3 It was noted that electoral figures for the proposed changes had now been received from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. The Draft Proposals Report would be presented to the next Commission meeting.

Plain English Proposals

- 3.4 The Secretariat had taken the necessary actions agreed at the October Commission meeting and a report would be presented to the next Commission meeting.

Swansea Community Review

- 3.5 It was reported that a reply had been sent to the Independents@Swansea as agreed at the last meeting. No further correspondence had been received.

Vale of Glamorgan Community Review

- 3.6 The Treasury Solicitor had now provided legal advice for the Vale of Glamorgan Draft Proposals Report. The Commission considered the advice given about the Community of St. Brides Major and the comparative sizes of the communities within The Vale of Glamorgan. It was noted that all the representations in favour of the Ogmore ward breaking away from the community had come from residents of Ogmore and that none had been received from St Brides Major or Southerndown. **It was agreed** that the Commission would propose that the ward of Ogmore should form a new community in the Draft Proposals Report and views would be sought on whether Southerndown should be included in the proposed Ogmore community or stay within the Community of St Brides Major.

4. CONWY COMMUNITY REVIEW – CONSIDERATION OF REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.1 The Commission considered the representations received for the Conwy Community Review Draft Proposals Report. Four issues had arisen from the representations received which were:

Public Right Of Way 63

- 4.2 The proposed realignment of the boundary between the Communities of Conwy and Llandudno followed the centre of the Public Right of Way (PROW) 63 footpath. Conwy County Borough Council stated that it would be preferable for the boundary to follow the fence to the south of the path to make sure that the whole of the path was included within the Community of Llandudno. **It was agreed** that the Commission would amend their proposed realignment of the boundary to follow the fence to the south of the footpath.

Bryn Pydew

- 4.3 Several representations pointed out that the proposed realignment of the boundary between the Communities of Conwy and Llandudno at Bryn Pydew did not include several properties which were as close to the settlement of Bryn Pydew as those properties which fell within the proposed realignment of the boundary. The Commission considered that the proposed boundary followed the clearly defined

line of the road. Given the spread of the extra properties and the apparent lack of clear geographical features it would be difficult to draw up an alternative boundary that would include the extra properties. It was agreed that the Commission would keep their proposed realignment of the boundary for their Final Proposals.

Deganwy Ward

- 4.4 Several representations pointed out that the proposed realignment of the boundary between the Communities of Conwy and Llandudno at Deganwy did not appear to take account of the possibility of any future development to the northeast of the residential area. It was reported that the Secretariat had ascertained during a site visit to the area that there was a steep embankment which would severely inhibit further development to the northeast. In addition, part of the area was a golf course. It was considered that future development to the northeast was therefore unlikely. **It was agreed** that the Commission would keep the proposed realignment for the Final Proposals.

Trefriw / Dolgarrog

- 4.5 It was reported that the Chair and the Deputy Secretary had attended a public meeting which had also included representatives of Trefriw and Dolgarrog Community Councils. It had become clear at the meeting that the proposed merger of the two communities was not widely supported and that there were now effective councils operating in both communities. **It was agreed** that the Commission would not propose the merger of the Communities of Trefriw and Dolgarrog.

5. CARDIFF COMMUNITY REVIEW

- 5.1 The Commission considered the earlier meeting they had held with several representatives of the residents of Canopus Close. It was clear from the meeting that the residents wished to stay as part of the Community of Old St. Mellons. It was noted that as both Canopus Close and Duncan Close shared the same access road they should both be within the same community. Should Canopus Close stay in Old St. Mellons then the Commission would need to address the issue of whether Duncan Close should also be moved from the Community of Rumney into the Community of Old St. Mellons. **It was agreed** that the Commission would write to the residents of Duncan Close seeking their views on this proposal.

6. WORKSHOP ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.1 The Secretary reported that the timetables for both workshops had been completed and these were tabled to the meeting. Feedback forms were still being received about the Llandudno AGOM workshop and overall the responses had been positive.

7. FINANCE REPORT – SECOND QUARTER 2008-09

- 7.1 It was reported that although there was an estimated overall underspend for the year end there were several items of upcoming large expenditure for which the exact costs were not known, notably the costs associated with the transformation of the Commission's IT system. **It was agreed** that the Secretariat would continue to monitor spending and report back to the Commission when the actual cost was known.

8. LGBCW FINANCE AND ACCOUNTANCY SERVICES

- 8.1 The Commission noted the choices available. **It was agreed** that the Secretariat would draft a paper for a future meeting which assessed the choices for the Commission.

9. NOTE OF MEETING WITH MINISTER

- 9.1 The Commission noted the record of their meeting with the Assembly's Local Government Minister. **It was agreed** that the Commission would periodically review the points raised.

10. REVIEW OF LGBCW – WAO REPORT

- 10.1 The Chair welcomed Mr Davies and Mr Herniman to the meeting. Mr Davies said that the overall conclusion of the WAO's report was that the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales (LGBCW) should continue but that several areas needed to be strengthened. The recommendations made in the report were that the Commission should:

1. Develop a Corporate Plan;
2. Develop balanced performance measures to monitor progress towards meeting the objectives and targets in the Corporate Plan;
3. Define quantitative and qualitative attributes of a review;
4. Make sure communications with stakeholders are and the public are clear;
5. Design a suitable management information system;
6. Develop robust budget setting procedures;
7. Strengthen budget monitoring reports to the Commission Members; and
8. Review the need for external accountancy function.

There were also recommendations made for the Welsh Assembly about issuing the Commission with Directions for the forthcoming electoral review and finalising the Commission's Management Statement and Financial Memorandum.

- 10.2 The Commission considered that the WAO's report was a valuable document; however they expressed concerns on some of the recommendations made. In relation to the issue of clearer communications with stakeholders and public, the Commission considered that their consultation processes together with their practice of holding open annual general meetings, particularly the recent successful open meeting in Llandudno, showed that significant measures were already in place. Mr Davies replied that whilst the effectiveness of the Commission's procedures was accepted there was scope for improvement in this area at a higher level than the review work by having a Corporate Plan in the public domain.

- 10.3 The Commission considered that formulating a Corporate Plan would be difficult without specific guidance and strategic direction from the Welsh Assembly. It was considered that the Commission could only address recommendations 1 and 3 with the cooperation of the Welsh Assembly. Mr Davies said that it should still be possible for the Commission to go ahead with formulating a Corporate Plan without the review directions from the Welsh Assembly. **It was agreed** that the Commission would start drafting a Corporate Plan with advice from their Sponsor Division. Mr Herniman said that WAO would be willing to assist the Commission in its talks with the Sponsor Division.

11. ELECTORAL REVIEWS

- 11.1 It was reported that the current situation in respect of the Welsh Assembly's Directions to the Commission had been included on the agenda for the Secretariat's quarterly liaison meeting with the Sponsor division.
- 11.2 The Commission considered that it would be helpful to hold presentations on the Directions and review process for each unitary authority at the start of the review. This should involve council officers, councillors, community councillors and the public.

12. PUBLIC AND PRIVILEGE HOLIDAYS CHRISTMAS 2008 AND YEAR 2009

- 12.1 The Commission noted the public holiday dates.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 13.1 It was reported that Bridgend Town Council had asked for a month's extension to the deadline for the receipt of representations for the community review draft proposals. It was agreed that the Commission would agree to this extension.
- 13.2 The Commission noted the draft sustainable development statement and sustainable procurement policy. These were approved pending any further comments from Members and would now be published.
- 13.3 It was reported that the Secretariat would shortly be interviewing a candidate for the vacant Team Support post.
- 13.4 The Chair took the opportunity of her last meeting as Chair and Member of the Commission to express her thanks for the support she had received from Members and staff, past and present, during her time at the Commission

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 14.1 The date for the next meeting was provisionally set for Wednesday 14th January at 10:45 a.m. depending on confirmation from Mr Bader.